



The CAPITOL HILL MONITOR

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MONTGOMERY & CARROLL COUNTIES PROPOSE TRUNKED SYSTEMS

As mentioned in the January 1994 newsletter, more area local governments plan to build 800 MHz radio systems in the newly allocated 866-869/821-824 MHz band. Montgomery County licensed its 800 MHz frequencies under the plan last May (refer to the January newsletter for the frequencies). The plan gives the county three years, until May of 1996, to get 70 percent of the proposed county government radio users on the system. If this goal is not met, the county risks losing the license. The plan also requires the county to have 100 percent of the users on-line within five years (May 1998).

RAM Mobile Data is conducting a study of the proposed radio system which could be operational as early as July, provided funding is allocated. The county proposes to build a 20-channel digital trunked system, probably Motorola, which will employ 12 to 15 transmit sites. The targeted geographical coverage is 95 percent of the county. Police and fire will be the initial users of the system. Eventually all county agencies are expected to make the switch to the trunked system. The complete system is estimated to cost between \$20 to \$30 million.

Meanwhile Carroll County, says RCMA's William Staubs in a recent Scanner Journal article, hopes to upgrade its existing radio systems which are plagued with dead spots. The \$6 million required to bring the current

systems up-to-snuff, Bill indicates, would just about pay for the proposed trunked system. The county has yet to appropriate money for the proposed radio system. Carroll County felt that, because of the shortage of 800 MHz allocations, it was important to get the authorization process started. If the system is not built, the county risks losing the license.

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SCANNING NON-MAINSTREAM FIRE DEPARTMENTS

by Alan Henney and Bill Hardman

When we monitor fire departments, we often think in terms of county, or in some cases, city fire departments. In addition to the city and county fire departments, however, numerous federal and military installations, and in some cases the private sector, provide their own fire protection and EMS services.

Publications such as Police Call do not specifically list frequencies for these fire departments, leaving many overlooked by scanner listeners.

Most fire departments featured in this article have mutual aid agreements with city/county jurisdictions, and, as a result, are assigned a unique station number on the city/county system. In many cases the federal and military fire stations use the same numbering scheme used by the local municipality to identify pieces of apparatus.

Fire Departments for the military are part of the engineering branch of their respective services. Each service names the branch slightly differently - Corps of Engineers for the Army, Civil Engineers for the Air Force, and Facilities Engineers for the Navy (USMC services are provided by the Navy). Almost all are currently staffed by professional firefighting civilians (as are the other federal departments), although once upon a time they were staffed by military personnel.

In This Issue:

- **Montgomery/Carroll Proposed Trunked Systems.....Page 1**
- **Non-Mainstream Fire Dept.'s...Page 1**
- **AAA Emergency Road Service...Page 5**
- **NewsCan.....Page 6**
- **Book Reviw.....Page 8**

A major difference between military fire departments and civilian ones is that the medic units and ambulances are part of the respective medical commands, and not the fire department. In some cases (Fort Belvoir and Quantico, for example), the fire dispatch is simulcast over the military police and medical radio nets.

Military installations (and most non-military, large Federal facilities) have "exclusive jurisdiction." In other words, the property is not, in a legal sense, part of the county (or counties) in which it is located. Additionally, although facilities in the DC metro area are relatively small, some, such as Quantico MCB, Fort Meade and the Institute of Standards and Technology are medium sized and larger in both area and population than some towns and cities. Quantico, for example, is located in four different Virginia counties. An additional consideration involves national security and the need for fireman to have security clearances for entry into selected areas. Several of the facilities have their own airfields, which requires crash trucks, as well as ammunition and petroleum storage sites which require special training.

Financial constraints have caused reductions and consolidations. For example, the Naval District of Washington provides fire services for Bolling AFB; while Andrews AFB provides such services for Washington Naval Air Facility.

Many of the smaller fire stations are often under financial pressure and have already been substantially reduced in size. So, please notify us of any changes, especially involving frequencies.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Georgetown University

151.9550 s GERMS (BLS Ambulance)

The university operates a basic-life support ambulance service, known as the Georgetown Emergency Response Medical Service (GERMS), which responds to on-campus emergencies only. GERMS also reportedly operates on the hospital security repeater, 464.825.

Naval District of Washington

148.3000 s Metro DC NDW Fire Ops
154.2950 s Fire Mutual Aid
139.5250 s Comm with Indian Head (see Charles Co.)
140.1000 s Navy Standard Crash/Rescue

140.1 is available for use at the Washington Air Facility, Anacostia Naval Station, Bethesda Medical Center helipad and at Quantico MCAF. The NDW fire department is headquartered at Bolling AFB (Building P-5). The department has four stations (1-Bolling, 2-Navy Yard, 3-Anacostia, 4-Research Lab) and maintains communications with other Naval fire departments (Bethesda, Indian Head and others). In addition, selected apparatus communicate on DC fire channels.

Saint Elizabeth's Hospital

165.2625 s Security and Engine 34

On Oct. 1, 1987 the District government assumed responsibility for Saint Elizabeth's Hospital. Hospital security and what remains of the fire department (DCFD Engine 34) continue to operate on 165.2625, the federal allocation originally assigned to the facility. As part of the District's fire department, Engine 34 also operates on DC fire channels.

Soldiers' & Airmen's Home

173.4125 s King Health Care Center Medics

Walter Reed Army Medical Center

172.1250 s F1: Fire
139.4000 s F2: Fire and Public Works
148.8000 s Ambulances

WRAMC operates two fire stations, one at the main facility (Station 55) and the other at the Forest Glen annex (Station 54). Both stations follow Montgomery County's apparatus numbering system: Engines, for example, identify by station number with a single-digit suffix and trucks identify using only the station number. Apparatus from stations 54 and 55 frequently coordinate activities on the Montgomery County and District fire channels, respectively.

The White House and VP Residence

Both the White House and the National Observatory rely on the District to provide fire prevention and general EMS services within their complexes -- even for helicopter landings. While monitoring DC fire, any combination of Engine 13, Foam Units 1 or 2 and TAU 1 or 2 en route to a "detail" or "on the air" indicates a presidential or vice presidential helicopter landing or departure is eminent.

As an interesting note, TAU is the "Twinned-Agent Unit," a truck which carries a tank of light water that is mixed with water when discharged. A second tank is filled with Purple-K Power. It is expelled by compressed Nitrogen. The unit has two lines that feed into a nozzle where the two are mixed when discharged.

When dispatching fire apparatus to the White House or the VP residence for such an event, DC fire will not formally dispatch the trucks over the radio. As soon as the apparatus leave the station, however, they usually indicate over 154.19 that they are en route to "the detail" or merely going "on the air." Upon arriving at the White House or VP residence, the fire trucks once again radio the dispatcher and acknowledge that they are "in position on the detail."

After arriving for the detail, Secret Service agents coordinate closely with the firefighters. In many cases the agents detailed to the fire trucks will identify as Hedgehog, the Secret Service code name for a fire truck.

Now let's look at some suburban Maryland and Virginia fire stations.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Annapolis Naval Station (Severn River Naval Command)

148.4250 s F1: Fire Ops
149.0000 s F2: Fireground
148.3000 s Fire Link to NDW

The US Naval Academy's fire station (Company 1) and the communications facility fire station (Company 2) are both designated as Station 46 on Anne Arundel County fire channels.

BWI Airport

154.1000 s Fire Ops
154.2800 s Fire Mutual Aid

BWI operates two fire stations which identify as stations 43 and 44 on BWI frequencies and on Anne Arundel County fire channels.

Coast Guard Depot, Curtis Bay

419.6500 s F1: Fire
419.8500 s F2: Fire

The fire station is designated as Station 47 on county fire channels.

Fort Meade

142.3750 s Medics (Kimbrough Army Hosp)
407.3000 s F1: Fire
407.3250 s F2: Fire

Company 1 is the main post and Company 2 is at Tipton AAF (which is in the process of closing). Both stations are designated as Station 45 on Anne Arundel County fire channels.

Gibson Island

The Gibson Island Corporation reportedly operates a single-engine fire department (anyone know its status?). Security on the island is licensed on two frequencies, 154.54 and 155.43, which are likely used by the fire apparatus as well.

ARLINGTON COUNTY

Fort Myer

150.7500 s Fire Ops (F1) and Military Police (F2)

The fire department, which also provides services at the Pentagon, Hederson Hall, and the Navy Annex, identifies as Station 61 on Arlington County fire channels.

Washington National Airport

165.5000 s F1: Airport Operations/Emergency
164.8250 s F3: Fire Ops
154.2800 s F5: Fire Mutual Aid (Metro)
154.2650 s Fire Mutual Aid (NoVA)

National Airport's fire department, which frequently responds on calls for Arlington County, identifies as Station 62 on the Arlington County and airport frequencies. Channels 2 and 4, not listed above, are used by police and maintenance. National and Dulles plan an 800 MHz trunked system in the near future (refer to the January newsletter for details).

BALTIMORE COUNTY

Bethlehem Steel (Sparrows Point)

The Bethlehem Steel plant operates its own police force, while the county maintains its fire department (Station 57) which operates on county fire channels. Bethlehem Steel police operate on 451.225 and 451.675, which are likely used by the fire units as well.

Maryland ANG (Martin State Airport)

The Warfield Maryland Air National Guard Fire Department, part of the 135th Civil Engineering Squadron, provides fire services for the airport and for the Martin Marietta defense plant. The full-time federally funded fire department, administered by the state military department, upon occasion responds on mutual aid calls with Baltimore County. Frequencies reportedly used by the department include 149.225 and 149.545. Any confirmations would be appreciated.

CALVERT COUNTY

Naval Research Laboratory, Chesapeake Bay Facility (Chesapeake Beach)

140.5800 s Fire Ops

The fire station is designated as Station 15 on Calvert County fire channels.

Solomons Island Naval Facility

See Patuxent River NAS listings (Saint Mary's County).

CHARLES COUNTY

Indianhead Naval Ordnance Station

139.5250 s F1: Fire
140.5750 s F2: Fire

The base operates three fire stations: Companies 1 and 2 are the ordnance station and Company 3 is the Naval EOD Center. All three are designated as Station 20 on Charles County fire channels.

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fort Belvoir (MDW)

143.3000 s DeWitt Hospital Ambulances
173.4375 s Fire Operations

Fire dispatches are usually simulcast on 143.3, 173.4375 and on the military police frequency, 150.555. All primary agencies at Fort Belvoir (police, public works[the new name for post engineers], fire, etc.) have capability of operating on the post's EOC channel, 143.35. Fort Belvoir south post and north post fire stations are designated as stations 63 and 65, respectively, on Fairfax County fire channels. Fort Belvoir also provides fire services for Davison Army Airfield, which is designated as Station 66.

Mount Vernon Estate

154.5700 s F1 Facility Operations
154.6000 s F2 Facility Operations

This is a private organization which owns and operates George Washington's Mount Vernon estate. Security, maintenance and the estate's fire station, known as Fairfax County Station 68, communicate on the above two channels.

FAUQUIER COUNTY

Vint Hill Farms Station

150.6500 s Fire and Public Works

Vint Hill Farms Station is on the base closure list. The fire station is designated as Fauquier County Station 20 (and reportedly as Prince William County Station 40).

Warrenton Training Facility

The training facility's fire department is designated as Station 19 on Fauquier County fire channels. The station is a sub-station of Mount Weather (See Loudoun County).

FREDERICK COUNTY

Fort Detrick

171.4750 s Fire and Public Works

The fire department is designated as Station 50 on the Frederick County fire channels.

KING GEORGE COUNTY

Naval Surface Warfare Center (Dahlgren)

140.1000 s Fire, Crash/Rescue
141.9750 r Security and Fire

The NSWC fire department is designated by King George County and by Charles County as Station 28.

LOUDOUN COUNTY

Mount Weather (FEMA)

139.7750 r Primary Fire & Security
138.2250 r Alternate Fire and Security

The Mount Weather fire station is designated as Station 21 on county fire channels.

Washington Dulles International Airport

165.5000 s F1: Airport Operations/Emergency
164.8250 s F3: Fire Ops
154.2800 s F5: Fire Mutual Aid

Both Dulles fire stations are designated as Station 64 on Fairfax and Loudoun county fire channels. Channels 2 and 4, not listed above, are used by police and maintenance. National and Dulles plan an 800 MHz trunked system in the near future (refer to the January newsletter for details).

Xerox Fire Brigade (Ashburn)

Xerox Corporation runs an employee-operated brush truck at its Leesburg facility. The truck likely operates on the corporation's 462.15 repeater. The station is designated as Station 22 on Loudoun County fire channels.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

David Taylor Ship Research & Development Center (Carderock)

140.3500 s Security and Fire

The fire station is designated as Station 52 on Montgomery County fire channels.

Defense Mapping Agency (Glen Echo)

164.9875 r Security and Fire

The DMA fire station identifies as Station 56 on Montgomery County fire channels.

National Institutes of Health (Bethesda)

419.8000 r/s Fire

The NIH fire department identifies as Station 10 on the NIH radio and as Station 51 on Montgomery County fire channels.

National Institute of Standards & Technology (Gaithersburg)

166.1500 r/s Security

The NIST fire department operates on Montgomery County fire channels as Station 53 and reportedly operates on the NIST security frequency (can anyone confirm?).

National Naval Medical Center (Bethesda)

140.2750 r/s Security and Fire

The fire department identifies as Station 50 on both 140.275 and county fire channels. 140.275 continues to be used at other Navy facilities, such as La Plata and Quantico, for ambulance services.

Naval Surface Warfare Center (White Oak)

139.5000 s Security and Fire

The fire department identifies as Station 55 on 139.5 and on Montgomery County fire channels. White Oak also provides fire services for Army facilities at Adelphi.

Walter Reed AMC Forest Glen Annex - See DC (WRAMC)

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Andrews Air Force Base

172.9500 s Malcolm Grow Med Center Ambulances
173.5875 s Fire, Crash & Rescue

Andrews AFB is designated as Station 74 on the Prince George's County fire radio, even though there are two stations on the base.

Cheltenham Naval Communications Station

150.1500 r/s Security and Fire

The Cheltenham Naval Base fire station is designated as Station 79 on county fire channels.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Atlantic Research Corp (Gainesville)

The status of this department is uncertain. Assuming the department still exists, it likely operates on one of the corporation's frequencies licensed at Gainesville (try 153.05, 153.17, 153.26 and 153.32). The station is designated as Station 46 on Prince William County fire channels.

Quantico Marine Corps Base and Turner MCAF

149.3500 r F1: Fire Ops
140.1000 s F2: Fire Crash/Rescue
140.2750 r NavMedComm Ambulances

Quantico operates four fire stations (Camp Barrett, Camp Upshur, Mainside and Turner Airfield). The airfield communicates primarily on 140.1. Each station is assigned at least one "station number" between 31 and 39 for identification purposes on Prince William County fire channels. In Stafford County, stations 13 and 14 are assigned to the Quantico fire stations.

SAINT MARY'S COUNTY

Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship (Piney Point)

This facility reportedly operates two fire engines and identifies as Station 8 on Saint Mary's County fire channels. Additional frequencies, if any, and current status of this department is unknown.

Patuxent River Naval Air Station

140.1000 s F1: Fire, Standard Crash/Rescue 138.6000s
F2: Fire Ops

Both Patuxent River fire stations (companies 1 and 2) are also designated as Saint Mary's County Station 13. The Webster Field and Solomons Island stations (companies 3 and 4) are designated as stations 14 and 16, respectively, and operate on the same frequencies as the Patuxent River fire apparatus, in addition to Calvert and Saint Mary's counties fire channels.

Steuart Petroleum (Piney Point)

This is another small fire department whose status is unknown. If the station still exists, it likely operates on the plant's channels, 49.56 and 49.58, and perhaps county fire channels.

AAA EMERGENCY ROAD SERVICE

by Ken Fowler

AAA Potomac, headquartered on Fair Lakes Circle Drive in Fairfax, operates an emergency road service fleet throughout the Metropolitan Washington area. This area includes a large portion of Virginia from Northern Virginia south to the Stafford County line and west to the West Virginia border. In Maryland, AAA covers the counties of Charles, Montgomery and Prince George's. Of course AAA also covers the District of Columbia. With more than 600,000 AAA members in this area alone, one can only imagine how busy the radio traffic gets.

The fleet of service vehicles includes contract towing companies equipped with AAA radios, locksmith services and AAA-owned light-duty and rollback cranes. Most AAA contracted towing companies communicate on their own radio systems as well as on the AAA frequencies.

AAA Frequencies

150.9050	F1 Arlington (WZT846-A)
452.5500	F2 Falls Church (WRM833)
452.6000	F3 Rockville (WZT850)
150.9650	F4 Rockville (WZT846-B)
452.5250	F5 Silver Spring (KLS515)
150.9500	F6 Falls Church (KDU646)
452.5750	F7 Falls Church (WXY454)

All frequencies listed above are simplex. VHF channels employ a CTCSS of 103.5 Hz, while the UHF channels

use 192.8 Hz. Channel assignment is based on the geographical area covered by the service vehicle (transmit sites are noted above). In addition to the channels listed above, AAA leases space on a 900 MHz trunked radio system, call sign WNVC618. Light-service vehicles operate primarily on 150.95 or on the 900 MHz trunked system. AAA may soon dispatch calls using mobile data terminals (MDT's).

AAA Codes

T1 Flat tire with spare
T1A Flat tire needs air
T2 Keys locked in vehicle
T2A Locksmith problem, call
T3 Out of gas
T4 Jump start/boost
T5 Cannot start, possible tow
T6 Tow
T6A Tow/special equipment
T7 Extrication/pull out of ditch
T7A Extrication from ice/snow
T9 Police call

Any code suffixed with the letter "A" indicates that extra equipment is needed or a special problem exists with the vehicle.

AAA Brevity-Codes

10- 1 Ready to write
10- 2 On location
10- 3 Clear call
10- 4 Message received
10- 5 With car, need member on location
10- 6 Got call in your hat/area
10- 7 Off the air/unavailable
10- 8 On the air/available for calls
10- 9 Cannot copy the transmission
10-10 Cannot locate
10-11 Gone on arrival (GOA)
10-12 Walk in call
10-13 Call canceled
10-14 Land-line/phone call
10-15 Return to shop
10-16 Shop call
10-18 Request truck-to-truck communication
10-20 Give location
10-50 Accident with injury
10-51 En route to call

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NEWSSCAN

by Brent Baker

WALKIE-TALKIES FOR DC SHOPKEEPERS? Community and business leaders in the District want to equip DC merchants with two-way radios in several Washington neighborhoods. A pilot program, reported News Channel

8, is envisioned for four troubled DC neighborhoods.

MPD TO EXPAND HOMICIDE UNIT. DC police officials are planning to rapidly increase the number of detectives in the department's homicide unit and assign many of them to specific areas of the city. The homicide unit, which has 44 detectives and officials, reported the Feb. 15 Washington Post, could expand to more than 100. "Most detectives in the unit handle 15 cases a year, about double the national average for homicide investigators... Some experienced homicide detectives have been detailed to task forces, increasing the case-loads for those still on homicides, according to some investigators."

Police officials told the Post that many of the new detectives will be drawn from other parts of the 4,200-member department, while others may come from specialized task forces. The mayor's budget, the Post noted, "calls for 'full staffing' of the department by Sept. 30, the end of the 1994 budget year. If that goal were achieved, the department would have a force of 4,500 officers, its authorized strength."

The new homicide detectives would be assigned to specific police districts on the theory they will become experts on neighborhood shooting wars and develop a rapport with law-abiding residents, patrol officers and crew members to help solve killings. Officials hope the new investigators will reduce the detectives' workloads to five or six cases a year. Detectives, noted the Post, will be expected to solve more homicide cases and will be held accountable.

"Heavy case-loads," the article stated, "are one reason District police close far fewer cases than detectives in other large cities with high per-capita homicide rates, according to police officials. Last year, DC police closed 45 percent of the city's 467 homicides with an arrest, a warrant or the identification of a suspect who by then was dead. Police departments in many other big cities with high levels of violence close more than 50 percent of homicide cases."

New homicide detectives will receive about nine weeks of training from the department, the medical examiner's office and the US Attorney's office. Investigators now work in squads out of a third-floor office at police headquarters, at 300 Indiana Ave. NW. They take cases on a rotating basis: Two-member teams get a case, then the next team in line takes the next homicide and so on.

By Fall, the article reported, a homicide squad will be assigned to each of the city's seven police districts. The size of those units will vary, depending on the level of violence in the district. The 7th District, one official told the Post, which has a high rate of violence, will have 23 homicide investigators, three sergeants and one lieutenant. Detectives based at headquarters will still visit homicide scenes but will be there to support the primary investigators at the scene, not to take over the case.

MPD CONSIDERS DISMANTLING VCRT. Last Fall, reported a Feb. 3 Washington Post article, DC Police Chief

Fred Thomas hailed the Violent Crime Response Team as a "cornerstone of his new Violent Crime and Gang Task Force. The team was given an \$80,000 truck equipped with a fax machine, telephones and an electronic sign that flashes an 800 number for witnesses to call. Its mandate was to go quickly to the scenes of non-fatal shootings and investigate them."

About 1,500 non-fatal shootings occur in the District each year, about three for each homicide. Most homicides occur on the eastern side of the city, the Post noted, particularly in the 7th Police District, east of the Anacostia River and south of Pennsylvania Avenue SE, where the response team operates. Investigators with the team have traded rumors that they are about to be disbanded. A police department spokeswoman told the Post that Thomas is considering reassigning members of the team. When Thomas announced the formation of the task force he said he would conduct such a review.

The task force has about 120 members, noted the Post, about 100 of whom are from the police department. The response team is a mixture of DC police detectives and officers and federal agents. The entire task force works out of a federal office at 1900 Half St. SW, which the police department just spent about \$18,000 renovating, a task force member reported.

The task force has made more than 500 arrests and has solved about half of approximately 70 cases, one investigator told the Post. Detectives in most of the police districts, who are burdened with burglaries, robberies and other cases, have closure rates lower than 50 percent on non-fatal shootings.

DEA/MPD TEAM TO FOCUS ON EAST CAPITOL DWELLINGS. The District Weekly section of the Feb. 17 Washington Post article reported that a MPD-DEA task force, known as Redrum [murder spelled backwards], will target the crime-plagued neighborhood around the East Capitol Dwellings with a 90-day anti-crime initiative similar to one that operated in the Greenway area.

Chief Thomas has directed the task force to concentrate on street-level dealers in particular neighborhoods, who are believed to be responsible for most of the shootings in the city's high-crime neighborhoods. Even though the task force includes federal agents, it operates under the direction of MPD. In the last three months, police officials told the Post, the task force has made 18 arrests. The Redrum task force operates primarily on DEA Channel 12, 419.275.

BIGGER ROLE FOR CAPITOL POLICE. After quite a bit of debate and controversy last year over the specific roles the Capitol Police should assume, Capitol Police Chief Gary Abrecht in December announced a five-point plan to assist the Metropolitan

Police. The December issue of the Capitol Hill Monitor noted that the Capitol Police had gained arrest authority in an expanded area around Capitol Hill, but were not planning to regularly patrol it. As detailed in the Jan. 10 Roll Call, within the expanded area, the Capitol Police will now "help gather evidence at DC crime scenes, book and process prisoners, transport prisoners, use its dog teams to search for suspects and evidence, and respond as the backup unit at crime scenes."

Separation of power issues concerned the Capitol Police Board, so the force will assist only within the Capitol Police force's jurisdiction. In 1992 that area was expanded to run from Third Street in the west, H Street in the north, Seventh Street in the east and Potomac Avenue in the south. "One exception," Roll Call noted, "will be the use of Capitol Police canine teams. The force has five dogs specifically trained to search buildings for suspects or evidence" which will be available to DC police "anywhere in the District on an as-needed, as-available basis."

In general, the Capitol Police "will respond as the second unit to a crime scene" so another DC police officer can be freed up to handle other calls. In addition, the plan will help keep more DC officers on the street by allowing MPD to book suspects at the Capitol Police station at 119 D St. NE, a Capitol Police sergeant explained. As the cooperation between the departments increases, more Capitol Police cruisers are coordinating with MPD on the 1st District's channel, 460.35.

THE TWO WORLDS OF CAPITOL HILL. Reporter and Capitol Hill resident Jim Myers wrote a 2,000-word essay which appeared in the Sunday Outlook section of the Jan. 16 Washington Post. As is common with many recent scanner listeners, he listens to the radio not as a hobby, but to stay informed. In the essay Myers said "I was sitting near a police scanner that I bought because there's often a feeling in this neighborhood, on the fringes of Capitol Hill, that things are going on -- sirens, helicopters hovering, gunfire -- and there's no quick way of knowing what or where or why."

"On the scanner that night, Dec. 30, I heard a DC policewoman frantically calling for help in the 200 block of 14th Street SE. When I got to the corner moments later, Officer Earline Harris was standing in the street, sobbing, still frantic, trying to direct help to a form lying on the steps of a row house. It's a moment in human hell that's far too common here: Before the eyes of a relative or friend, a life oozes out into the street. This time that life belonged to a police officer, a 25-year-old named Jason E. White."

"Much mayhem had occurred here before Dec. 30 that didn't make the news. Wild gunfights, car chases and Hollywood stuff almost -- don't get noted, as some neighbors say, unless someone dies. But that's not always true. Some shooting deaths, horrible scenes of gore that even neighborhood children witness, don't make the news either. Officer White's death, of course,

did make the news. The neighborhood made the news; the neighborhood sounded pretty awful at points, a bad place to live, and that upset people. It's a good neighborhood, they said. Lots of good people."

FAIRFAX COUNTY TO PUT PARAMEDICS ONTO FIRE ENGINES. As part of a pilot program five Fairfax County fire engines will each respond to calls with an additional firefighter who is also a paramedic. The county, Assistant Chief James Strickland told News Channel 8, currently operates 19 medic units. The program will reduce the minimum staffing of medic units from three to two while increasing minimum staffing on selected engines from three to four. The extra paramedics would be assigned to engines at fire stations which have no paramedic. If the pilot program successfully meets its six-minute response goal, a paramedic could be in every station within 18 months. Refer to September's newsletter for more details.

VIRGINIA POLICE GET LAPTOPS. Alexandria and Arlington police plan to issue a laptop computer to every officer. The Feb. 9 *Fairfax Journal* reported that the two departments "have been jointly testing various laptop models that they believe will save time, produce more accurate reports and, perhaps most importantly, provide officers on the street with information to which they don't currently have quick access." The story reported that "later this year the departments hope to replace the current mobile data terminals... with the laptops."

If they plan to have "quick access" to information one would assume the departments don't plan to drop the MDTs but supplement them with laptops; or provide a system to interconnect the laptops to the MDT transmitters. Indeed, the newspaper article also noted that MDTs can run license and wanted checks but the laptops "will be able to perform those functions and much more, such as quickly providing information on a suspect." The biggest advantage of laptops is that officers can carry them inside a house or whatever and type into them as they conduct an interview. More specific details on either system would be appreciated.

FOLLOW THAT CAR PHONE. A federal-state-private venture this spring will test using cellular phone transmissions to identify traffic jams, a *Fairfax Journal* story reported last fall. A six-month test will be conducted "on three stretches: Shirley Highway, from Washington to the Beltway; the westbound Beltway from Shirley Highway to Interstate 270 in Maryland; and on I-270 from the Beltway to a point 10 miles north." Engineers, the *Journal* reported, will use "equipment on three Bell Atlantic towers to pinpoint the source of cellular phone calls." Then engineers at a Rockville facility will "track the signal for a few seconds to determine the vehicle's speed."

With 10 percent of Washington area cars equipped with cellular phones, the system should work during rush hours. But it's unclear, according to a Federal Highway

Administration official, whether there are enough car phones in use at non-rush times or on secondary roads, such as Route 50. In addition to the FHA, the other partners in the project are the Maryland and Virginia highway departments, Bell Atlantic Mobile, Engineering Research Associates of Vienna and Farradyne Systems of Annandale.

DIGITAL CELLULAR -- FOR THE BIRDS? Digital cellular technology, still in its infancy, is experiencing some growing pains, says the lead of a recent *Wall Street Journal* article. "Customers hoping for clear conversations and anti-eavesdropping security are wondering why they hear what sounds like bird calls instead. The industry calls this unwanted din 'warbling.'" According to the article, the interference "comes when a digital phone mis-codes background noise in a car or on a street corner during transmission. Conventional analog phones transmit this as normal noise, but now digital circuitry can mistakenly try to convert it to speech, turning a call into something like a grackles' convention."

"Another bug is echoes," the article noted, "when faulty speech compression sends delayed reflections of speakers' voices back to them. Industry consultant Herschel Shostek surveyed 400 dealers and found dozens of customers 'are bringing the phones back, thinking there's something wrong with them.' Carriers say not to worry: Steady improvements should eliminate the chirpy static as digital use expands." While only 66,000 of the 5.7 million cellular phones sold last year were digital, that was a twentyfold increase over 1992.

Macaw Cellular Communications, Motorola and others, the article indicated, are perfecting new echo-cancellation and error-correction techniques for quieter phone calls. "Software from Coherent Communications Systems cancels echoes and injects its own synthetic background hum to stop the phone from converting noise into speech. That, of course, might seem to undercut a key selling feature of digital service, namely its promise of quieter calls. Nonetheless, the software is being used in the new Macaw -- not macaw -- network."

Gary Mitchelson contributed to this month's column.

BOOK REVIEW: HENDY EISENSEN'S SCANNERS & SECRET FREQUENCIES

reviewed by Alan Henney

During our October gathering I passed this handbook around and it was popular, especially with those who are recent scanner listeners. Even though Eisen's \$20 300-page book frequently emphasizes the sensationalized aspects of our hobby, such as monitoring baby monitors, cellular and cordless phones, and even the CIA, he does cover a broad range of topics especially useful to beginners.

Chapters are dedicated to basic radio theory and principles, antennas, scanners, scanner modifications, the FCC and spectrum usage, CB, amateur, military, Industrial, transpor-

tation and public safety radio communication, and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act. The book is full of lists: frequency allocation tables, scanner manufacturer and club addresses and numerous others. If you want to get more into the hobby, and don't mind spending \$20 plus postage on a scanner publication, this may be the book for you. In any event, I suggest you write Index, the publisher, and request a catalog.

This month's review book was provided by the publisher, Index Publishing, which promotes its books as "Unexpected and outrageous books at the limits of publishing." For more details write for a free catalog to Index Publishing Group, 3368 Governor Dr., Suite 273F, San Diego, Calif. 92122. Views and comments appearing in this review do not necessarily reflect those of CHM or represent an endorsement.

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Please address all correspondence to Alan. We encourage readers to submit material and to write articles which relate to the hobby. All submissions are subject to editing for both style and content. When submitting material please make certain we have your phone number should we have any questions. We welcome frequency and visitor requests, but please include a SASE.

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The Capitol Hill Monitor is the non-profit monthly newsletter of the Capitol Hill Monitors. The newsletter keeps scanner enthusiasts abreast of local meetings, frequency profiles and other topics of interest. Dues (which includes 12 issues) are \$8. Kindly make checks payable to Alan Henney.

Meeting Coordinators:

Mike Peyton, Maryland Coordinator (703-902-6241)
Ken Fowler, Virginia Coordinator (703-385-2165)

Capitol Hill Monitor's Scanner/Shortwave Net:

Listen for the CHM net, hosted by Ken Fowler, at 7:30 p.m. on the first and third Monday of each month on 146.91 MHz.

Frequency Forum Computer Bulletin Board:

We encourage computer users to log onto Jack Anderson's Frequency Forum computer BBS at 703-207-9622 (8-N-1). Frequency Forum is the official electronic gathering place for readers of the Capitol Hill Monitor.

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